

Gender Equality Plan of Fachhochschule Dortmund – University of Applied Sciences and Arts

**A Summary of the Key Elements for External Parties, New Employees and Students
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Introduction

Since 1999, public universities in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) are legally required to draw up a Gender Equality Plan every three to five years. This plan defines measures designed to achieve equal representation of women and men across all groups of employees and students and at every hierarchical level. The achievement of these goals is tracked through gender-related monitoring of student and staff statistics and reported to the university Senate.

The current Gender Equality Plan, which covers the period from 2023 to 2027, consists of a framework plan for the entire university and gender equality plans for the various units: faculties, administration, institutes and central facilities. The framework plan sets out the overarching objectives and general conditions, while the gender equality plans specify the goals and measures relevant to each unit.

The Senate approves the framework plan and the gender equality plans are aligned with it. The departmental councils decide on the gender equality plans for the respective faculties; the Chancellor approves the plan for the administration; and the heads of central facilities and institutes approve the plans for their respective units.

The Gender Equality Plan is an essential tool at the departments for personnel planning and professional development. Its implementation and evaluation are a special responsibility of the departmental management, the personnel administration and all employees in supervisory or leadership positions.

Preamble to the Current Framework Plan (Term 2023 to 2027)

Guided by its mission statement, Fachhochschule Dortmund is committed to gender equality at all levels in the performance of its duties (Gender Mainstreaming).¹

The university strives to ensure that women and men have equal opportunities for professional and academic development in line with their qualifications, to eliminate structural gender disadvantages and to rule out discrimination of any kind. Measures to eliminate underrepresentation may also target men in areas where their underrepresentation constitutes a structural disadvantage at multiple levels.

¹ Gender Mainstreaming involves the reorganization, improvement, development, monitoring and evaluation of decision-making processes. The aim of Gender Mainstreaming is to incorporate the perspective of gender relations into all decision-making processes and to ensure that all decisions contribute to the equality of all genders.

Awareness-raising measures take into account intersectional connections among various potential dimensions of inequality. This is because the category of “gender”² overlaps with other dimensions of diversity (such as physical/health impairments, migration background, educational background, ethnicity, religion or worldview, sexual identity or orientation). In turn, programs and initiatives addressing diversity always incorporate gender aspects.

Fachhochschule Dortmund ensures that all members and affiliates have access to decisions and programs concerning gender equality.

The university also aims to strengthen cooperative and partnership-based behavior among its members and affiliates in particular through information materials, discussion groups, training sessions, guidance during appointment processes, as well as a wide range of qualification opportunities. In addition, the university seeks to improve the working conditions of both women and men in all areas.

Strategies and Measures to Balance Gender Underrepresentation in Qualification, Professional and Leadership Positions

For Fachhochschule Dortmund, as a corporation under public law in the federal state of North Rhine-Westphalia, the so-called decision quota applies in areas where women are still underrepresented: if a female candidate is equally qualified as a male applicant for a position, promotion, or assignment of higher-level duties, she is to be given preference.

Beyond this legal requirement, the Gender Equality Plan specifies additional instruments to help reduce this imbalance in areas where women are underrepresented when filling positions. Professorships are of particular importance in this regard.

The following instruments are listed in the Gender Equality Plan:

- Early contact with potential female candidates through professional networks.
- Participation in funding programs for the development of early-career female researchers.
- If there is underrepresentation in a particular area or at a particular hierarchical level, newly available positions must be advertised publicly or internally.
- The target figure for the proportion of women among professors is 50 %. The first step is to achieve the respective faculty-specific target quota³ determined by the Ministry of

² The term “gender” refers to the social and cultural gender role.

³ Architecture: 38 %; Design: 50 %; Electrical Engineering: 14 %; Computer Science: 15 %; Mechanical Engineering: 18 %; Applied Social Sciences: 50 %; Business Studies: 33 %; Information Technology: 14%

Culture and Science (MKW) by the end of this Gender Equality Plan's term. This target quota also applies to substitute and visiting professors.

- The target figure for the proportion of women among academic staff and in the doctoral support program (40 % and 50 % part-time positions) corresponds to the proportion of female graduates with Master's degrees.
- Internal and external programs are implemented to attract female academic staff and promote their professional development. The aim is to support their advancement to the next qualification level and to ensure optimal integration into discipline-specific networks.
- In areas with a low proportion of women, equally qualified female applicants are to be given preference when appointing adjunct lecturers. Supervisors are expected to actively seek and encourage suitable female candidates to apply for open positions in such areas.
- In selection procedures, all formally qualified female applicants should, wherever possible, be invited to interviews; when there are many applicants, at least half of the invitations should go to women.
- All those involved in the recruitment process will work towards swift, fair and transparent procedures and to counteract potential gender bias⁴.
- Selection committees should, whenever possible, be composed of an equal number of women and men.
- Half of the members of each appointment committee (for professorships) and each recruitment committee (for teaching positions with special tasks) must be women. As appointment committees regularly have five members, at minimum, two women, one of whom must be a professor, must be members of the committee. Female professors from related disciplines or from other universities may also be elected to the appointment committee.
- Two expert reviews are required for appointment procedures: one of these must be written by a woman.
- In the context of selecting the best candidates, if qualifications are equal, a woman should always be considered when making list proposals.

⁴ In this context, "gender bias" refers to the gender-stereotypical perception of applicants.

Personnel Development and Career Promotion

Fachhochschule Dortmund aims to achieve a balanced gender ratio among students and graduates. In the faculties of Information Technology, Electrical Engineering, Computer Science and Mechanical Engineering, the proportion of female students is to be increased by at least two percentage points.

The following instruments are specified in the Gender Equality Plan:

- Target group-oriented initiatives for female school students offered by the Women's Project Laboratory (Frauenprojektlabor - FPL) and by all central and decentralized players involved in the introductory phase of studies.
- Gender-differentiated cohort analyses as part of quality management (ECTS credits, dropout rates) by the faculties and the Institute of Higher Educations Didactics Zukunftswerkstatt. If gender disparities become apparent, appropriate measures are developed.
- Creation interdisciplinary STEM degree programs with interdisciplinary content (with social or environmental relevance) that have proven to attract female students.
- Support and mentoring throughout the entire course of study provided by the Women's Project Laboratory.
- Career Service assistance in preparing for entry into the labor market.
- Female students should be appropriately represented in student research assistant and research associate positions. In areas where they are underrepresented, instructors are encouraged to actively recruit women for these positions.
- The central alumni program supports the faculties in implementing initiatives that involve female graduates as role models.
- Employees on leave and part-time contracts have full access to continuing education and training. Necessary childcare costs may be reimbursed.
- Fair working conditions also include appropriate pay aligned with the requirements of the respective job. If a gender pay gap is identified in the monitoring process, Fachhochschule Dortmund will develop appropriate measures to counteract this.

Compatibility of Studies/Employment and Care Responsibilities

- Fachhochschule Dortmund was first certified as family-friendly in 2008 and has since continued to develop its programs and instruments through a review process every three

years. The University Management, representatives of all faculties, the General Students' Committee AStA, the staff councils and the representative body for severely disabled persons are involved in this process.

- One of the most important instruments for employees is the flexibility of working hours and work location. The university has very generous regulations for flexitime and remote work, which can be approved by the respective supervisors (within the scope of the work responsibilities and legal boundaries). In most cases, employees can reduce their weekly working hours in order to better fulfill their family obligations and increase them again when their family situation changes.
- Leave periods for childcare and caregiving are considered as competence-enhancing. Part-time work is not an obstacle to professional development, further training, higher pay grades and consideration in performance-based pay.
- Men are encouraged to participate in caregiving.
- The university provides a range of childcare options: places in daycare centers and with childminders, as well as mobile childcare for emergencies and off-peak hours. If parents bring their children to campus, they can use 'Kids Boxes' with toys and baby equipment, as well as parent-child rooms at each campus location.
- The faculties ensure a minimum offering of compulsory and elective courses during the opening hours of childcare facilities.
- The faculties are working to increase flexibility in study programs and examinations, for example through the expansion of blended learning, so that students with children or care responsibilities can meet the requirements and specifications of the study regulations.
- The general examination regulations allow for flexibility in the event of organizational problems (e.g., in cases where children fall ill on exam dates) to compensate for disadvantages.

Role of the Equal Opportunity Officer

- The duties of the Equal Opportunity Officer are regulated by the Equal Opportunities Act of North Rhine-Westphalia (LGG NRW) and the North Rhine-Westphalia Higher Education Act (HG). Their core responsibility is to participate in all matters related to the equality of women and men, in particular personnel, organizational and social measures, and in the drafting of gender equality plans. If the Equal Opportunity Officer is not involved or is not involved in a timely manner, the measure is legally invalid.

- The central Equal Opportunity Officer participates in the meetings of the University Council, Senate, Rectorate, departmental councils, appointment committees and other university bodies with the same rights to speak and submit motions as regular members.
- The central Equal Opportunity Officer and her deputies are elected in accordance with the statutes of the basic order and appointed by the University Management. In accordance with the Equal Opportunities Act of North Rhine-Westphalia, only women may hold these offices.
- One representative (the Equal Opportunity Officer or her deputy) is to be elected from each of the status groups (professors, research associates, technical and administrative staff, students). The term of office is four years, except for the student representative (one year). The Equal Opportunity Officers are not bound by professional instructions.
- Each faculty elects departmental Equal Opportunity Officers and, where possible, deputies.
- To advise and support the central Equal Opportunity Officers, the Senate elects an Equal Opportunities Commission, which monitors the development and implementation of the gender equality plans and participates in the internal allocation of funds. The commission is gender parity, with one woman and one man elected from each status group. The Equal Opportunity Officer, their deputies and the departmental Equal Opportunity Officers are members of the commission without voting rights.

Gender Equality in University Strategy and Committee Work

- All programs and projects at Fachhochschule Dortmund must take gender aspects into account. In target agreements with internal faculties and units, these must be anchored as strategic objectives on an equal footing with other strategic goals and cross-departmental tasks.
- Faculties must ensure that female researchers and artists are treated equally to their male colleagues when allocating material and personnel resources. Resources (funds, space, equipment) must always be distributed in a gender-equitable manner.
- Commissions, advisory boards and other committees should be composed with gender parity, unless there is an objectively justified exception in individual cases.

- Women and men are equally encouraged to participate in committees and working groups. If necessary, they can be supported by personnel development and workload relief measures.
- Faculties, central facilities and the administration are also evaluated on how they implement gender equality.
- For the purposes of monitoring, the University Management and the (departmental) management collect and present data at the (departmental) unit level in a gender-specific manner. Gender differences are to be recorded and evaluated within the framework of quality in teaching and learning.

Organizational Culture

- Teamwork between female and male experts is encouraged.
- The Senate Resolution on the Prevention of Sexual Discrimination and Violence applies to the entire university. All members of the university should be able to study and work in dignity and autonomy. Sexual discrimination and violence are to be prevented as much as possible through a new protection concept. Incidents must be addressed by countermeasures. The university will also develop a Code of Conduct.
- All responsible parties must ensure gender-equitable and inclusive language in internal and external communication.

Studies, Teaching, Research and Artistic Projects

- When planning the curriculum, consideration is given to whether courses can include content from gender-related research. Professors who wish to integrate such topics receive support and funding from gender equality funds.
- When establishing new degree programs and specializations, the internal accreditation process assesses how attractive the program content and career profile are for both genders.
- Marketing for existing and new degree programs actively counters gender-specific stereotypes and clichés.
- Fachhochschule Dortmund promotes flexibility in teaching and examinations. A strategy for part-time degree programs takes into account the needs of students with care responsibilities and those in employment.

- Fachhochschule Dortmund advises students and prospective students on:
 - Choosing a degree program
 - Study opportunities within their field
 - Acquiring practical experience during their studies
 - Career entry
 - Balancing care responsibilities and academic work

and actively works against existing disadvantages on the labor market as well as gender-specific external and internal and stereotyping.

- Faculties in which women are underrepresented in research, offer targeted support. It is ensured that female researchers and artists are informed about funding opportunities.
- Networks and mentoring for women are to be publicized. Teachers prepare suitable female students specifically for research work. Internal and external programs are to be used to employ female Master's students as research associates and to support female Master's graduates in pursuing a cooperative doctorate.
- Across faculties, teachers and committees draw on the expertise of researchers/instructors engaged in gender and diversity issues.